



FEBRUARY 2021

## Doing Business in Avon Lake

- In January, Matthew Majercak was sworn in as the Avon Lake Police Department's newest patrolman. Welcome to the Police Department!
- Firefighter Patrick Furnas was sworn in by Mayor Zilka in January. He replaces retiring member, Jon Scott, who will enjoy a well-deserved retirement after 27 years of service with the Avon Lake Fire Department and the City of Avon Lake.
- Yard waste pick-up begins March 1st. Leaves can be put in paper refuse bags or personal containers that are 33 gallons or less. Personal containers should be labeled "yard waste" and placed at curbside on the regularly scheduled day for garbage pickup by Kimble.
- It is the City's intention to safely open the pool this summer. Passes will be available for purchase online at [www.AvonLakeRec.com](http://www.AvonLakeRec.com), beginning March 1st.
- There are several Parks & Recreation programs for every age to enjoy throughout the winter, including a youth basketball program, baseball clinics and fitness classes at the Old Firehouse. Visit [www.AvonLakeRec.com](http://www.AvonLakeRec.com) for more information and to keep up to date with information on Safety Town, Summer Camp 2021, facility rentals and seasonal employment.
- On December 15, 2020, the Avon Lake Board of Municipal Utilities, which oversees the management and operations of Avon Lake Regional Water, approved keeping water and wastewater rates at current amounts. There will be no water or wastewater rate increase for 2021. Visit [www.AvonLakeWater.org](http://www.AvonLakeWater.org) for more information.

In August 2020, City Council formed the Business Navigation Ad Hoc Committee comprised of Marty O'Donnell, Council President; Billie Jo David, Council Ward I; Bill Heine, Zoning Board Representative; Gary Ebert, Law Director; Ted Esborn, Economic Development Director; along with Advisory Members Mayor Zilka and Public Works Director Joe Reitz. The objectives of the Ad Hoc Committee are to:

- Develop stronger communications between the Building, Planning and Zoning Departments.
- Streamline the process for new and existing businesses wishing to locate or expand in Avon Lake by providing cost saving information and an upfront timeline.
- Deliver efficient, understandable and quality services to assist in the City's Economic Development.
- Bridge the link between the three departments and the Economic Development Department.
- Provide oversight and accountability of these departments not routinely reviewed by City Council.
- Establish continuous improvement meetings on an ongoing basis.

The Ad Hoc Committee met weekly and spent more than 100 hours interviewing businesses, cities, departments and conducting research. This fact-finding process identified redundancies and errors with City processes, benchmarked best practices in other cities, and opened the lines of communication between business owners and the City. Business owners expressed positive experiences with City staff and the Ad Hoc Committee found that the City's process is very customer focused.

The Ad Hoc Committee presented their list of recommendations to the Administration and City Council on December 14, 2020. To read the complete report, please contact Valerie Rosmarin, Clerk of Council at [vrosmarin@avonlake.org](mailto:vrosmarin@avonlake.org) or at (440) 930-4121. ■

## Maintaining Our Neighborhoods

The Human Resources Department and City Council created the new position of Deputy Zoning and Property Maintenance Coordinator in the Public Works Department. The individual to be selected for this position will be required to hold a Bachelor's degree in either Urban Planning, Public Administration, or Civil Engineering and have a working knowledge of the State of Ohio building codes and the City's zoning codes, public nuisance codes and City of Avon Lake ordinances. The Deputy Zoning and Property Maintenance Coordinator will assist the Zoning Administrator with inspections and serve as a liaison for the Public Works Department. Other responsibilities include providing guidance to various City boards and commissions, promoting City code education to residents through community forums and enforcing property maintenance code violations. ■

"With this new position, the City will become proactive rather than reactive for property maintenance and sidewalk repair."

Mr. K.C. Zuber, Chair  
Human Resources Committee

DEPARTMENT  
HIGHLIGHTS



## Looking Ahead to 2021

2020 was a true challenge for us all as we had to adapt to a threat we could not see, yet one that continues to affect our lives so profoundly. As we enter 2021, the administration of the City of Avon Lake is committed to continue to provide quality city services at the level that residents have come to enjoy.

One of the changes we are implementing for 2021 is to the annual ward meetings. Traditionally held in-person, this year will be conducted via Zoom on March 3 at 7:00 p.m. Residents can submit questions and concerns in advance (via email, U.S. mail, or drop box at City Hall) or during the meeting (via text). The meeting will be live-streamed on the City website, Facebook, and cable access (Channel 1025 - Spectrum; Channel 21 - WOW). I encourage you to join us to learn more about important community issues. Please see the accompanying article for more details.

We're pleased to announce several capital improvements projects planned for 2021. Vital to the well-being of the city, projects this year include:

- A \$1.5 million street program to repair residential streets.
- The repaving of Walker Road from Route 83 to John Christ Winery.
- The repaving of Walker Road from Route 83 to Ambleside Drive.
- Engineering will begin on the improvement of Moore Road from Walker Road south to the railroad tracks with paving planned for early 2022 through ODOT funding.
- A new restroom will be constructed at Weiss Park. Thanks to Senator Nathan Manning, the State capital improvement budget that was passed in December included \$100,000 for the renovation of a pavilion in the same park.
- Phase II of the Central Avon Lake Drainage Project will be engineered with work to begin as soon as practical.

We look forward to a time when normal activities can resume. In the meantime, please continue to do your part for health and safety of the community. Together we can make a difference.

Mayor, Avon Lake

## Specialized Business COVID-19 Initiatives

Every year, the City of Avon Lake establishes programs and initiatives for its businesses. The devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic created the need for initiatives to provide assistance to struggling businesses. In March 2020, Avon Lake's Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) announced a grant program for the bars and restaurants of Avon Lake. The CIC awarded a total of \$98,000 to twenty-five businesses, each receiving \$3,000 - \$4,000.

Eight months later, in mid-November, the City rolled out a \$100,000 grant program for small businesses. Launched on December 1, the Avon Lake COVID-19 Small Business Relief Grant program made \$2,500 grants available to businesses located in commercial spaces in the City. Initially, the grant program was only open to businesses that employed 3 - 20 workers. In January, the City opened up the program to sole proprietors. To date, the City has awarded 38 of the 40 available grants.

In addition to the grant programs, the City designed a COVID Correspondence plan. In April, the City contacted 182 Avon Lake businesses, and asked them similar COVID-related questions. The answers received led to new initiatives, including connecting businesses to Avon Lake job seekers. As a result, the City launched Job Posting Emails, which is a simple mechanism using a page on the City's website for employers to post job listings, and for job seekers to sign up to receive the emails. Another resource that was introduced was Business Spotlights which aired on the City's social media platforms. Working with the City's Digital Media Department, the first group of Business Spotlights featured twenty Avon Lake businesses.

In June, the city streamlined the process for restaurants to apply for temporary permits to change their site plan in order to serve more socially-distanced patrons outdoors. The City collaborated with the Ohio Division of Liquor Control so businesses could apply for their city permit and state liquor control approval at the same time. ■

### Car Theft Precautions

Last month, five vehicles were stolen from driveways in Avon Lake on Belmont and Rebecca Lane. A sixth vehicle was stolen in a similar manner later in the month from Pamilla Circle. Five of the six vehicles were recovered, processed and returned to the owners.

Over the past six months, several west side Cleveland suburbs have had similar vehicle thefts. Suspects traveled into suburban neighborhoods during the early morning hours and searched for unlocked cars, which are prime targets. In some instances, the suspects used garage door openers from unlocked cars to enter a residence and look for keys. As witnessed in home security videos, suspects sometimes traveled in groups of three or more.

When turning in for the night, please remember to secure your vehicles. Do not attempt to confront any suspicious individuals. Please contact us at 440-933-4567 to report any suspicious activity. We would rather be called and not needed than needed and not called.

### Fraudulent Unemployment Claims

We have seen an increase in the number of fraudulent unemployment claims. Residents are learning that their identity was used to file these claims through their employers. Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services homepage has a place for people to report fraudulent unemployment claims (<https://jfs.ohio.gov/fraud/>). The credit bureaus (Experian, Equifax, and Transunion) can assist people who have had their identity stolen.

Ohio Lt. Governor Jon Husted recently stated more than half of the 1.4 million Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefits claims made in Ohio to date have been flagged as potentially fraudulent.



## Ward 3 Welcomes New Council Representative

Mark Spaetzel was appointed and sworn in as the new Avon Lake City Council Ward 3 Representative on September 28, 2020. Mr. Spaetzel serves as a member of the Communications, Environmental, & Recreational Programming Committee, Economic Development Committee, Walker Road Ad Hoc Committee and as Chair of the Building & Utilities Committee.

Due to health reasons, Avon Lake City Council Ward 3 Representative Gary Izo resigned effective September 4, 2020. When a Council vacancy occurs, Avon Lake City Charter requires all remaining members of City Council to fill the vacancy by a majority vote and the individual appointed will serve through December 31 following the next regular election. For this vacancy, a successor for the remaining two years (of the four-year term) will be determined at the November 2, 2021, election.

"Mr. Spaetzel will be a great asset for City Council and the City with his previous administrative experience and his working with the public," stated Council President O'Donnell.

City Council conducted interviews of Ward 3 residents interested in the position and selected Mr. Spaetzel based on his work experience in municipal government and service to the community. Mark is a lifelong resident of Avon Lake and recently retired from the Bay Village Police Department with over 34 years of service, seven years of which he served as the Chief of Police. In that capacity, he honed his leadership



*Ward 3 Council Representative, Mark Spaetzel*

and management skills and continually broadened his knowledge with a focus on public safety and the needs of the community.

His community service includes coaching sports, leading a Cub Scout troop, and being an active member of the United Church of Christ where he developed and managed an after-school program and has participated, coordinated and led disaster recovery mission trips throughout the country. In 2018, he served on the Avon Lake City Charter Review Commission. In that capacity, Mark reviewed and scrutinized the City Charter and, as a member of the Commission, recommended changes which were approved by residents at the 2018 general election.

"He is a third generation Avon Laker and a graduate of Avon Lake High School, along with his kids, so he knows the history and needs of the community," said O'Donnell.

Mark can be contacted at 216-777-7182 or [mspaetzel@avonlake.org](mailto:mspaetzel@avonlake.org). ■

## COVID-19 Vaccine Scam

Scammers have been calling local seniors asking for Medicare information, claiming it was needed in order to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. These are criminals posing as Lorain County Public Health officials.

Lorain County Public Health will never call asking you for money, health insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, or Social Security information in order to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

If you receive a similar phone call, report it to your local police department or the Lorain County Sheriff's Office.

## Just Don't Answer Robocalls

Robocalls are auto-dialed calls that deliver a prerecorded message. Legal robocalls may include calls from your doctor's office reminding you of an appointment, calls from your child's school with weather-related information; etc. Illegal robocalls are calls that you have not consented to that generally try to get you to pay for something or to give away personal information.

If you do receive a robocall, let the call go to voicemail and then research what is said on the voicemail to see if it's legitimate. If you do pick-up, don't press any numbers. By doing this, you are confirming that you have a live phone number; this may cause you to receive more robocalls.

To report illegal robocalls, text the word "ROBO" to 888111, call 1-800-282-0515 or visit <https://www.OhioProtects.org/robo> to complete and submit an online form.

## Charitable Donation Safety

When you receive a request to donate money, take the following precautions:

- Ask for the charity's name and web address.
- Where is its physical location, phone number, and types of programs run by the charity?
- How much of the donated money supports the programs you want to support?
- Avoid paying with cash, gift cards, or wire transfers. Payment by these methods is difficult to track and therefore, difficult to recover. Instead, consider donating by using a credit card, which tends to be more secure and trackable.

If the charity is unwilling to answer your questions, that is a red flag. Visit <https://charitable.ohioago.gov/Charity-Registration> for a searchable database of registered charities in the state. Visit <https://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Files/Forms/Forms-for-Consumers> to file a complaint.

## Shop Local Grand Prize Winner



The Shop Local—Shop Avon Lake grand prize winner, Diane Bublinec (of Sheffield Lake), received the winning ticket at Erie Nails in the Drug Mart Plaza. Ms. Bublinec received gift cards worth \$50 from 35 different businesses, totaling \$1,750 in Avon Lake shopping and dining. This year, there were also individual drawings at each participating business, and each winner received a \$50 gift card to that business. In total, there were 35 winners in addition to the grand prize winner.

## PLEASE NOTE

### Virtual City-Wide Ward Meeting - March 3rd

This year's ward meeting will have a different format due to necessary COVID-19 precautions. Instead of the separate Ward meetings as in past years, there will be one city-wide Ward meeting that will be aired live on March 3rd, 7:00-9:00 p.m. The meeting will be aired live on the City Facebook page and ALC-TV Government Access channels (Spectrum Channel 1025 and WOW Channel 21) from Council Chambers, and will not be open to the public.

Any questions or comments for City officials can be submitted prior to the meeting. Questions can be mailed to Mary Krupar at 150 Avon Belden Road, emailed to [mkrupar@avonlake.org](mailto:mkrupar@avonlake.org), or placed in a drop-off box located outside of City Hall. Deadline to receive questions to be addressed during the meeting is March 3rd at Noon. In addition, residents can submit questions via text to 440-396-0074 during the meeting. Meeting details and link to view the meeting will be posted on the City website on February 24. Visit [www.AvonLake.org/NEWS](http://www.AvonLake.org/NEWS).

### Citizen of the Year/Project of the Year Nominations

Avon Lake Community Council is now accepting nominations for Citizen of the Year/Project of the Year for 2020. Each year Avon Lake Community Council honors two outstanding achievements in our community: (1) a volunteer who has excelled in the area of community service and (2) a project that merits community-wide recognition.

Nomination forms can be found on the City website: [www.AvonLake.org/Our-Community/Organizations-Clubs](http://www.AvonLake.org/Our-Community/Organizations-Clubs). Completed forms can be dropped off at Avon Lake City Hall, emailed to [modonnell@avonlake.org](mailto:modonnell@avonlake.org), or mailed to Martin O'Donnell, City of Avon Lake, 150 Avon Belden Rd., Avon Lake, OH 44012.

Deadline for nominations is Tuesday, March 30, 2021. ■

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440-930-4100

Municipal Court  
440-930-4103

Police  
440-933-4567

Public Works:  
Planning/Engineering  
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Service  
440-930-4126

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